

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A teleconference system for supporting realization of cooperative work among a plurality of conference systems, the teleconference system comprising:

5 site systems each being installed at a plurality of sites respectively, and each configured to operate the corresponding conference system; and

a shared workspace server configured to connect the site systems to each other and to share a workspace of an object for managing and using a task as a cooperation unit among the sites.

2. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the shared workspace server is further configured to manage a session for managing connection of the site systems, a file used in a conference and created as a record of the conference, reference information to a resource relevant to the conference, and history information of file access made by conference participants.

3. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the shared workspace server is further configured to provide a user interface for connecting a session and making reference to a file and/or a resource.

4. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the shared workspace server is further configured to instruct, when a client starts a session, all other

clients already starting the session to connect to the client.

5. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the site system comprises:

5 an electronic whiteboard configured to provide a graphical user interface provided by a shared workspace;

a video and audio server configured to code and decode video and audio and to transmit and receive video and audio to and from any other site system for sharing motion and

10 behavior of participants at the sites;

an authentication unit configured to authenticate identification of the participants; and

a site server configured to manage a session in the site systems, a file used in a conference and created as  
15 a record of the conference, reference information to a resource relevant to the conference, and history information of file access made by the participants.

6. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the shared workspace server is further configured  
20 to select a workspace based on user identification information transmitted from the site system.

7. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 6, wherein the shared workspace server is further configured to select the workspace based on the user identification  
25 information transmitted using an IC card by the site

system.

8. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the shared workspace server is further configured to select a workspace based on workspace specification  
5 information transmitted from the site system.

9. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 8, wherein the shared workspace server is further configured to select the workspace based on workspace specification information transmitted by the site system based on  
10 information retained on an IC card.

10. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the shared workspace server is further configured to respond to a file reference request received from the site system, to start application software to reference  
15 the file, and to provide an input/output interface with the application for each site system with a session established.

11. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 10, wherein the shared workspace server is further configured  
20 to, in a case where the file specified in the file reference request is not previously registered in the workspace, temporarily register the file.

12. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the site system is configured to start application  
25 software to reference the file specified in a file

reference request, and to provide an input/output interface with the application for any other site system with a session established.

13. The teleconference system as claimed in claim 12,  
5 wherein the site system is further configured to receive the file specified in a file reference request from any other site system, to start application software to reference the file, and to provide an input/output interface with the application for any other site system  
10 with a session established.

14. A teleconference support method for supporting realization of cooperative work among a plurality of conference systems, the method comprising:

providing a workspace comprising one or more  
15 sessions;

opening the workspace in response to workspace selection of a user;

adding the opened workspace to an active workspace;  
and

20 managing use of the workspace.

15. The teleconference support method as claimed in claim 14 further comprising providing a user interface for displaying workspace candidates required for the user to select a workspace.

25 16. The teleconference support method as claimed in claim

14, wherein the managing use of the workspace includes providing a user interface for making reference to a file and/or a resource.

17. The teleconference support method as claimed in claim  
5 14, wherein the managing use of the workspace includes registering reference to a file and/or a resource.

18. The teleconference support method as claimed in claim  
14, wherein the managing use of the workspace includes switching a workspace, starting a subworkspace, and  
10 terminating the workspace.

19. The teleconference support method as claimed in claim  
18, wherein in the managing use of the workspace, the original workspace is deactivated in the switching of the workspace and/or in the starting of the subworkspace.

15 20. The teleconference support method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the managing use of the workspace includes instructing, when a client starts a session, all other clients already starting the session to connect to the client.

20 21. The teleconference support method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the opening of the workspace includes selecting a workspace based on user identification information transmitted from the conference system.

22. The teleconference support method as claimed in claim  
25 14 wherein the opening of the workspace includes selecting

a workspace based on user identification information transmitted using an IC card by the conference system.

23. The teleconference support method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the opening the workspace includes selecting  
5 a workspace based on workspace specification information transmitted from the conference system.

24. The teleconference support method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the opening of the workspace includes selecting  
a workspace based on workspace specification information  
10 transmitted by the conference system based on information retained on an IC card.

25. A computer program described in a computer-readable format so as to execute processing for supporting  
realization of cooperative work among a plurality of  
15 conference systems in a computer system, the computer program comprising:

means for providing a workspace comprising one or more sessions;

means for opening the workspace in response to  
20 workspace selection of a user;

means for adding the opened workspace to an active workspace; and

means for managing use of the workspace.